

NEWS RELEASE

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### **Capitol Preservation Project Begins**

The Utah State Capitol Preservation Board today held a groundbreaking marking the beginning of a comprehensive restoration and construction project of the Capitol campus.

“This historic and architectural treasure is truly ‘the People’s House’,” said Governor Mike Leavitt. “We must preserve it for generations to come.”

The first phase of construction will begin this week on two extension buildings behind the Capitol to the east and west. While the Capitol is being restored and brought to appropriate seismic standards, employees will be housed in the new four-story buildings. Capitol architect Richard Kletting’s original master plan for the campus included these two buildings as locations to house offices as services for the public grew over time.

“The Capitol Preservation Board examined many options, including leasing existing space,” said David Hart, executive director of the Capitol Preservation Board. “The analysis determined that constructing new buildings was the most cost-effective option, with the added bonus of staying true to the original architect’s plans for this historic symbol of Utah.”

Construction of the extension buildings is slated for completion in 2004. Capitol employees, including the governor’s office, the attorney general and the Utah legislature will be housed in the buildings during restoration and seismic retrofitting of the Capitol.

“The board has developed a comprehensive plan for this campus that looks ahead 20 years,” said Hart. “A project of this size and importance must offer vision that includes appropriate technology while staying true to the architectural integrity of the Capitol Hill complex.”

Extensive renovation of the Capitol is scheduled to be complete in 2008. In addition to resolving structural problems, the basic systems of the building including electrical, air-conditioning, heating and lighting will be brought up to current standards.

“This building is nearly 90 years old, and would most likely be destroyed during even earthquake,” said Hart. “The building frame is concrete, the granite on the exterior is not attached to the structure, and the dome rests on the building with nothing to tie it to the main facility. Balustrades around the roof are held in place only with gravity. These problems present significant safety issues.”

Methods that are similar to those used to restore Salt Lake City’s historic City and County Building on Main Street will be used on the Capitol. A primary component

includes “base isolation,” which is accomplished by holding the building in place and removing the foundation and inserting large ‘shock absorbers’ that will allow the building to move in an earthquake without breaking apart.

Original artifacts contained within the building, including the marble staircase, paintings, murals and statues will be repaired and restored as well.

### **Capitol History**

- The initial groundbreaking was held in December 12, 1912, and a ceremony for commencement of construction was held in April 1913. Governor William Spry officiated, saying "We expect this building to be one which will be a joy as long as it might stand, and we propose to build it so that it shall stand through all time."
- March 12, 1912, Richard A. Kletting was chosen by the Capitol Commission as the architect of the building.
- In April 1914, a time capsule was set in the base of the front steps column.
- The building was completed July 3, 1915, at a cost of \$2,739,528. The dedication ceremony was held on October 9, 1916.

### *Additional Facts:*

- The marble columns in the Rotunda are among the longest solid marble columns in the U.S.A.
- Seagulls in the dome have six foot wingspans
- The chandelier in the Rotunda weighs 6,000 pounds, and its chain is 7,000 pounds
- The Gold Room Rug was made in Glasgow, Scotland
- The exterior marble came from Cottonwood Canyon; most of the interior marble came from Tate, Georgia.
- The brown marble in the House chambers and other areas came from Birdeye, Utah.

The Capitol Preservation Board has the responsibility for the planning and preservation of the Utah State Capitol. The Board’s mission is to preserve the State Capitol for current and future generations to use and enjoy as a symbol of our state government and freedoms, as well as the great national historical monument it is.

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